



SEPARATION OF FAMILIES AT THE BORDER: *FAQs*

How can I help children in detention and affected families?

Click here to see three actions you can take immediately! Also, consider organizing a vigil at your house of worship or a community meeting in your neighborhood. Volunteer and support local agencies which provide services to affected families and children.

What is happening in Tornillo?

The U.S. government constructed a tent shelter complex for migrant children, including children separated from their parents at the the Tornillo port of entry, about 45 minutes outside of El Paso, TX. The announcement of this location was made on June 14th and within 24 hours 200 children were transferred to this location. More are expected there soon.

What is happening at Fort Bliss?

The Trump administration is considering Fort Bliss, a U.S. Army base headquartered in El Paso, Texas as an additional detention site for children.

Why is this happening?

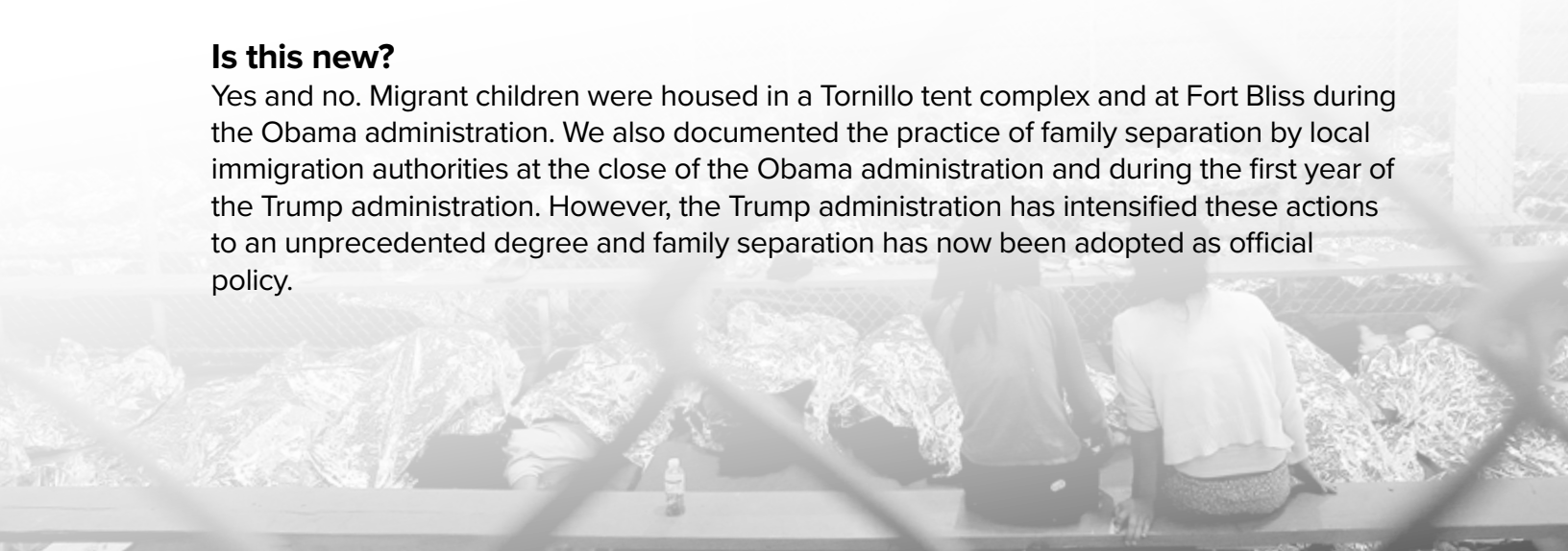
The Trump administration has taken these actions as part of a new “zero tolerance” policy, part of an overall intensification of immigration enforcement measures.

Is this legal?

No. The separation of families and detention of children or families is a violation of the constitutional right to family integrity, and of internationally recognized human rights (pursuant to international conventions on the Rights of the Child, and Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances). The Rome Statute defines torture and forced disappearances as “crimes against humanity,” the most serious type of human rights violation.

Is this new?

Yes and no. Migrant children were housed in a Tornillo tent complex and at Fort Bliss during the Obama administration. We also documented the practice of family separation by local immigration authorities at the close of the Obama administration and during the first year of the Trump administration. However, the Trump administration has intensified these actions to an unprecedented degree and family separation has now been adopted as official policy.





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What does “zero tolerance” mean?

The new policy means the government will criminally prosecute every single person who crosses the border in an unauthorized way.

What does “zero tolerance” look like?

It looks like criminalizing all migrants, tearing children away from their parents, and dividing families against their will. Approximately 2,000 children have been separated from their families since this policy went into effect.

What is asylum?

Asylum is a legal means of protection from persecution or violence in one’s country of origin. Migrants have the right to seek asylum under U.S. and international law and the U.S. has the obligation to handle their cases carefully and fairly.

What is the difference between asylum seekers and refugees?

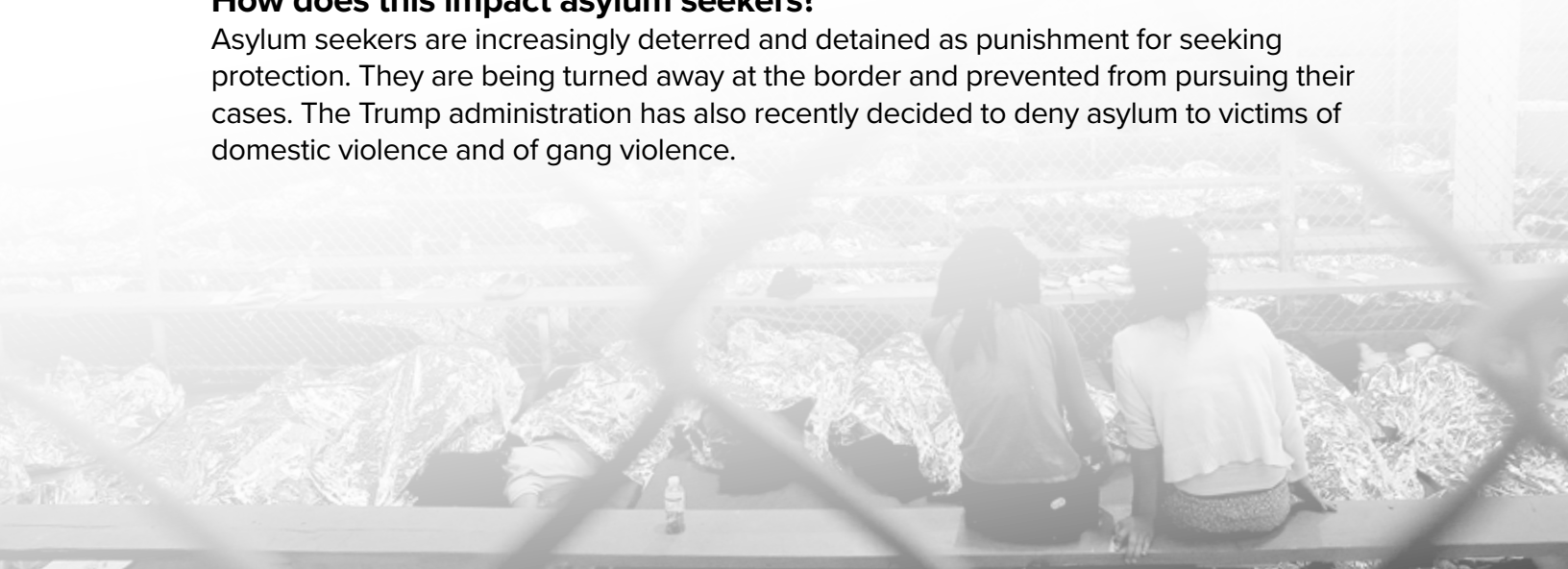
Asylum can only be applied for once a person has arrived at the U.S. border. Refugee status is usually granted in a person’s country of origin. Both processes require the showing of a “well founded fear of persecution,” and the same standards should be applied.

Why do people come to the U.S. to seek asylum?

Most of those currently applying for asylum are from Central America and Mexico, which are experiencing unprecedented levels of poverty and violence because of the consequences of U.S. policy within the context of the drug war and “free trade” (CAFTA and NAFTA). There are many asylum seekers from elsewhere in Latin America, Africa, and Asia who are increasingly forced to come to the border, as they are unable to apply for refugee protection in their country.

How does this impact asylum seekers?

Asylum seekers are increasingly deterred and detained as punishment for seeking protection. They are being turned away at the border and prevented from pursuing their cases. The Trump administration has also recently decided to deny asylum to victims of domestic violence and of gang violence.





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How do these policies affect the U.S.-Mexico border region?

Zero tolerance and family separation were first tested in the El Paso sector of the border between July and November 2017, as we documented in our report, *Sealing the Border*. Most of the families that have been separated and the children that have been detained as a result have been concentrated in the U.S.-Mexico border region. The first additional child detention site created pursuant to these policies, at Tornillo, is located near El Paso.

What do faith voices say about this?

Catholic social teaching says that human beings have the right to a dignified life, and to migrate, along with the right to stay in their country of origin without fear of persecution and violence. Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, the president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, recently said, “At its core, asylum is an instrument to preserve the right to life.” And on the issue of family separation, he said, “Separating babies from their mothers is not the answer and is immoral.”



Join us for a candle light procession in solidarity with our migrant sisters and brothers on Friday evening, July 20th, 2018.

*To learn more about what you can do **click here** to read 3 things you can do about family separation at the border, or you can visit www.hopeborder.org to find out more.*

Click here to read *Sealing the Border: The Criminalization of Asylum Seekers in the Trump Era*, or you visit www.hopeborder.org to read HOPE's latest report.

